

Message Text

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SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER DENOUNCES POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN ZONE

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS TACK MADE A STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN EL PANAMA AMERICA NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 6 IN WHICH HE DENOUNCED THE ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE CANAL ZONE AS AN "INADMISSIBLE INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA." IN PREVIOUS SUNDAY EDITIONS, THE NEWSPAPER HAD GIVEN FEATURE TREATMENT TO THE TOPIC AND HAD LINKED ORGANIZING EFFORTS OF THE US DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO PLOTTING AGAINST PANAMA BY THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY. REACTION WAS TRIGGERED BY A WRITTEN NOTICE ISSUED BY THE LOCAL US DEMOCRATIC PARTY CALLING UPON US CITIZENS TO MEET AND SELECT DELEGATES TO THE 1974 CONFERENCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN KANSAS CITY. THE PANAMANIAN INTERPRET THESE ACTIVITIES TO MEAN THE US REGARDS CANAL ZONE "AS IF IT WERE AMERICAN TERRITORY." END SUMMARY

1. FOREIGN MINISTER TACK, RESPONDING TO PRESS INQUIRIES CONCERNING ALLEGED ACTIVITIES BY US POLITICAL PARTIES AND JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY IN CANAL ZONE MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN EL PANAMA AMERICA OCTOBER 6: QUOTE ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREVIOUS OCCASIONS THE CHANCERY HAS PUT FORTH IN A VERY

FIRM MANNER PANAMA'S REJECTION OF ACTIVITIES BY FOREIGN POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE PART OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY KNOWN AS THE CANAL ZONE. THERE DOES NOT EXIST ANY CLAUSE IN THE TREATIES PRESENTLY IN FORCE THAT AUTHORIZED THAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES, WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF OPERATING AND MAINTAINING THE CANAL. AND, MOREOVER, SUCH FOREIGN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN PANAMANIAN TERRITORY CONSTITUTE AN INADMISSIBLE INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA."

2. THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT FOLLOWED A SERIES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES DENOUNCING ALLEGED ACTIVITIES OF JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY AND EFFORTS OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S CANAL ZONE CHAPTER TO SELECT CANAL ZONE DELEGATES TO PARTY'S NATIONAL CONVENTION IN DECEMBER. PANAMANIAN PRESS HAD LINKED SOUTHERN WING OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY WITH BIRCHERS AND CHARGED THAT PLOT WAS BEING HATCHED BY THEM TO OBSTRUCT TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. THE PRESS HAD ALSO CHARGED THAT AMERICANS WERE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN ORGANIZED POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN CANAL ZONE WHEREAS PANAMANIAN ARE BARRED FROM DOING SO "ON THEIR OWN TERRITORY." RECALCITRANT ATTITUDE OF CANAL ZONE RESIDENTS COULD, ACCORDING TO EL PANAMA AMERICA EDITORIALIST, LEAD TO ANOTHER ALGERIA.

3. COMMENT: PANAMANIAN PRESS AND OFFICIALS CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROTEST VIGOROUSLY AT ANY SIGN OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY AMERICANS IN THE CANAL ZONE AND ALLEGE THAT PANAMANIAN, IN BEING BARRED FROM SUCH ACTIVITY, ARE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. IRONICALLY, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DELEGATE SELECTION NOTICE WHICH TRIGGERED THE CHARGES OF JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY ACTIVITY WAS HERSELF IN 1972 A MCGOVERN DELEGATE FROM TEXAS TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY ORGANIZED ACTIVITY BY BIRCHERS IN CANAL ZONE.

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